

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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R 261050Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5097
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1274

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARA SIX)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, US, SO
SUBJECT: SIAD'S OPTIONS: STILL OPEN

REF: MOGADISCIO 1249

SUMMARY: NOTWITHSTANDING AMBASSADOR ADDOU'S CLAIMS THAT SIAD IS DETERMINED TO END HIS SOVIET MILITARY DEPENDENCY, I BELIEVE THAT SIAD'S OPTIONS ARE STILL QUITE OPEN. SIAD'S SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION IS STILL QUITE FLUID. SITUATION IN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA HAS NOT YET CRYSTALIZED TO POINT WHERE EITHER SIAD OR SOVIETS HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO END THEIR COLLABORATION. I REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT EITHER BELIEVE THEIR DIFFERENCES ARE
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IRRECONCILABLE. AT PRESENT TIME, SIAD IS MANEUVERING TO GIVE HIMSELF BEST OF ALL WORLDS--EAST AND WEST AND ARAB-- AS HE SEARCHES FOR MILITARY MEANS TO SECURE HIS WON BORDERS WHILE HE PURSUES HIS INSURGENCY GOALS IN OGADEN.
END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY COMMENTS ON REFTEL AND THOUGHTS AS TO WHERE

SIAD PRESENTLY STANDS WITH REGARD TO SOVIETS, TO ETHIOPIA AND TO US. I BELIEVE THEM WORTH RAISING AS WE ENTER A TIME OF TRANSITION AND UNCERTAINTY WITH REGARD TO OUR RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT SIAD.

2. SIAD IS NOT INFORMED OF OUR RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR ARMS (REFTEL). ADDOU TELLS ME SIAD IS SIXTY TO SEVENTY PERCENT PERSUADED THAT HE IS ON RIGHT POLICY COURSE IN SEEKING ALTERNATIVE TO HIS SOVIET MILITARY DEPENDENCY. ADDOU IMPLIES HOWEVER THAT HE WILL ONLY BE FULLY CONVINCED WHEN WEAPONS ARE IN HIS INVENTORY. IN MEANTIME, WE CAN ASSUME SIAD WILL RETAIN HIS MILITARY TIES WITH MOSCOW UNTIL HE FEELS SOMALIA'S MILITARY DEFENSE NEEDS ARE FULLY GUARANTEED FROM OTHER SOURCES. EGYPTIANS TELL US SAME THING.

3. WHAT ARE SIAD'S SECURITY NEEDS? SIAD SAYS HE WANTS SECURITY AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF PRESENT AND FUTURE ETHIOPIAN ATTACK. FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, SIAD AND THE SOMALI MILITARY HAVE BELIEVED ETHIOPIAN INVASION WAS IMMINENT BECAUSE OF SUCCESSES OF WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT (WSLF) IN OGADEN. SIAD SUSPECTS THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL LAUNCH THEIR LONG FORMULATED BATTLE PLAN WHICH CALLS FOR SEIZURE LARGE CHUNK OF SOMALI TERRITORY WHEN REVERSES IN OGADEN REACH UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS. ACCORDING TO EGYPTIANS, SOMALI MILITARY HAS BEEN CONVINCED FOR SOME WEEKS THAT ETHIOPIANS PLAN TO BY PASS OGADEN AND INVADE SOMALIA IN HARGEISA AREA
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AND STRIKE FOR THE SEA. EGYPTIANS CLAIM SECONDARY PLAN CALLS FOR INVASION IN GALCAIO REGION WITH GOAL OF CUTTING SOMALIA IN TWO.

4. SIAD'S PROBLEM IS THAT IF ETHIOPIANS DO MANGE TO SEIZE A PARCEL OF SOMALI TERRITORY AND CANNOT BE DISLODGED, THEN INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CRISIS MIGHT FORCE HIM EITHER THROUGH THE UN OR THE OAU TO RETREAT FROM THE OGADEN FRONT, THUS LOSING AN OPPORTUNITY WHICH PROBABLY WON'T COME AGAIN IN HIS POLITICAL LIFETIME.

5. SO IN ADDITION TO MILITARY SUPPORT AGAINST ETHIOPIAN THREAT, SIAD WANTS THE DEFENSIVE SECURITY TO PURSUE HIS IRREDENTIST GOALS IN THE OGADEN, AS WELL AS THE ARMS TO GUARANTEE HIS VICTORY SHOULD THE OGADEN INSURGENCY SUCCEED. WHILE HE IS NEGOTIATING THAT SUPPORT, SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL CONTINUE. WE MIGHT ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT A SIZEABLE SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA GIVES SIAD VERY MINIMAL SECURITY AGAINST ETHIOPIAN ATTACK, SINCE SO LONG AS THE SOVIETS MAINTAIN THEIR POSITION IN SOMALIA AND BELIEVE THAT THEY CAN MANAGE THEIR DUAL-SUPPORT DILEMMA IN THE HORN,

THEY MAY COUNSEL CAUTION IN ETHIOPIA.

6. WHAT I BELIEVE THEREFORE IS THAT SIAD'S SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION IS STILL QUITE FLUID. NOTWITHSTANDING OUR DECISION TO HELP SUPPLY SIAD WITH DEFENSIVE ARMS, I DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE SITUATION EITHER IN SOMALIA OR ETHIOPIA HAS SO CRYSTALIZED AS TO LEAVE SIAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TODISPENSE WITH HIS SOVIET DEPENDENCY. IN OTHER WORDS, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT EITHER SOMALIA OR THE SOVIET UNION HAS YET CONCLUDED THAT THEIR DIFFERENCES ARE IRRECONCILABLE AND A BREAK UNAVOIDABLE. THE OPTIONS REMAIN OPEN.

7. I BELIEVE ALSO THAT SIAD HAS NEVER RECONCILED
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HIMSELF TO THE PERMANENCE OF THE SOVIET ROLE IN ETHIOPIA. I SUSPECT THAT SIAD HAS ALWAYS HOPED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD RECOGNIZE THE FOLLY OF THEIR ETHIOPIAN VENTURE. HIS GUERRILLA EFFORTS IN OGADEN, IF NOT HIS POLITICAL PURPOSE, HAVE BEEN TO STEADILY INCREASE THE FRAGILITY OF THE MENGISTU REGIME. HE HAS HOPED THAT MOSCOW AS RESULT MIGHT RENOUNCE ITS SUPPORT FOR MENGISTU. THIS HAS NOT YET HAPPENED. YET WE SHOULD NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SIAD'S APPEAL TO THE WEST FOR ARMS MAY

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EXDIS

BE INTENDED TO SERVE FINAL NOTICE TO THE RUSSIANS THAT SIAD IS NOW SERIOUSLY PURSUING AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET SUPPORT -- WITH SOME SUCCESS -- THUS GIVING THE SOVIETS A LAST OPPORTUNITY TO RECONSIDER THEIR POLICY IN HORN BEFORE THOSE DIFFERENCES DO BECOME IRRECONCILABLE.

8. SIMILARLY, WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER POSSIBLE SIAD HOPE THAT THE PACE OF ETHIOPIAN DISINTEGRATION WOULD OUTRUN THE SOVIET ABILITY TO SALVAGE IT, THUS GIVING SIAD WHAT HE WANTED IN OGADEN WHILE MAKING IT UNNECESSARY FOR HIM TO SEVER HIS SOVIET TIES. HIS HOPE FOR ETHIOPIAN COLLAPSE BEFORE HE HAS CHANGED MILITARY HORSES MAY STILL HOLD TRUE.

9. GIVEN FLUIDITY OF SITUATION AND OPTIONS STILL AVAILABLE TO SIAD, WE SHOULD TAKE A CAREFUL LOOK AT OUR ABILITY TO
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TRULY SATISFY SIAD'S SECURITY NEEDS. WHAT ARE CHANCES, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT SIAD WILL FEEL SUFFICIENTLY SECURE AS RESULT OF US MILITARY SUPPORT, TOGETHER WITH HELP FROM IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, FRANCE, UK, ETC., TO ACTUALLY END HIS MILITARY DEPENDENCE UPON USSR?

10. THOSE CHANCES ARE PROBLEMATIC. AT PRESENT SOMALIA'S DEFENSIVE NEEDS ARE INDISSOLUABLY LINKED TO SOMALI ACTIVITIES IN OGGADEN. IN MY TALK WITH AMBASSADOR ADDOU ON JULY 22, I POINTED OUT THAT A BASIC PROBLEM WHICH CONFRONTS US IN ANY MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA IS QUESTION OF SOMALI IRREDENTISM. I SAID THE INCREASING EVIDENCE THAT SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY REGULARS ARE UTILIZED AS BONA FIDE WSLF FORCES RAISES CONSIDERABLE SUSPICIONS ON GENUINENESS OF SIAD'S OFT-STATED POLICY THAT HE WILL NEVER USE SNA TO RECOVER LOST TERRITORIES. THIS IS BASIC ISSUE WHICH HAS FRACTURED -- BUT NOT BROKEN -- SOMALI-SOVIET RELATIONS. ANY MILITARY SUPPLY SUCCESSOR(S) TO SOVIETS IN SOMALIA WILL INHERIT SAME PROBLEM. SINCE SOMALIA'S DEFENSIVE NEEDS WILL CONTINUE TO BE DERIVED FROM ITS MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO OGADEN INSURGENCY, WHAT SIAD WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK IS OPEN-ENDED MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WHICH WILL PROTECT HIS BORDERS AND YET CONTINUE TO UNDERWRITE HIS AMBITIONS IN OGADEN AND TO GUARANTEE HIS VICTORIES SHOULD HE SUCCEED. FOR

THIS REASON, I AM DEEPLY SKEPITCAL THAT US CAN BE AS FORTHCOMING
OR AS GENEROUS AS SIAD WILL DEMAND. FOR THAT REASON TOO,
I VIEW WITH SAME SKEPTICISM SIAD'S COMMITTMENT TO END HIS
SOVIET TIES. WE SHOULD KEEP THIS IN MIND AS WE BEGIN TO STUDY
HOW WE CAN HELP MEET HIS MILITARY NEEDS.
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